

Brussels, 2 September 2020

The International Office for Human Rights – Action Colombia (OIDHACO) strongly condemns the violent actions that have taken place throughout Colombia, the serious deterioration of the humanitarian situation and the security situation for human rights defenders, social leaders and people working to implement the peace agreements.

In August alone, according to the NGO *Fundación Pares*, ten massacres were committed in Colombia.¹ According to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, from January to 15 August 2020, 33 massacres were committed, compared to 39 in 2019, the highest figure since 2014. The organisation *Indepaz* has recorded 45 massacres up to 23 August 2020.

The massacres in August particularly targeted young people and children. The most serious incidents were the massacres of 8 young people in Samaniego, Nariño, and of 5 children in Cali.

The massacres disproportionately affected the Pacific region: 22 of the 45 massacres registered by *Indepaz* up to 23 August were committed in the departments of Valle del Cauca, Cauca, Nariño, Putumayo and Chocó. Also severely affected were the departments of Antioquia (9 massacres, forced displacements) and Norte de Santander (4 massacres).

Massacres have been historically used by the different actors of the armed conflict to spread fear in the civilian population and facilitate land grabbing and social and territorial control. According to the report “*¡Basta Ya!*” produced by the National Centre for Historical Memory, 1,982 massacres were committed in Colombia between 1980 and 2012, 58.8% perpetrated by the paramilitaries, 17.3% by the guerrilla, and 8% by the State security forces. The majority of these massacres were committed between 1996 and 2006.

The departments where massacres are taking place are also those most affected by other consequences of the internal armed conflict: between January and July, 18,650 people were forcibly displaced from

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2 August: Santander de Quilichao, Cauca. Brayan Stiven Guetio Ipia (18 years old), Manuel David Larrahondo (24 years old) and Lizardo Collazos Findo (23 years old).

3 August: Puerto Santander, Cúcuta, Norte de Santander. 06 people killed.

12 August: Llano Verde, Cali, Valle del Cauca. Luis Fernando Montaña (15 years old), Álvaro José Caicedo (14 years old), Jean Paul Cruz Perlaza (16 years old), Jair Andrés Cortés Castro (14 years old) and Léider Cárdenas (15 years old).

15 August. Santa Catalina, Samaniego, Nariño. Brayan Alexis Cuarán (25 years old), Sebastián Quintero (23 years old), Laura Michel Melo Riascos (19 years old), Byron Patiño (25 years old), Óscar Andrés Obando (23 years old), Rubén Darío Ibarra (20 years old), Daniel Steven Vargas (22 years old) and Elian Benavides (19 years old).

18 August: Pialapi Pueblo Viejo, Ricaurte, Nariño. 03 young indigenous people killed.

21 August: La Uribe, El Tambó, Cauca. 06 people killed.

21 August: El Caracol, Arauca. 05 people killed.

22 August: Guayacona, Tumaco, Nariño. Jorge Alexander Cortes (22 years old), Eduar Everi (50 years old), Duvan Erney Quiroz (22 years old), Eduard Quiroz (24 years old), Jesús Casanova (37 years old), Diego Roney Acosa (17 years old).

24 August: Venecia, Antioquia. Yornan Dávila Henao (18 years old), José David Velásquez Rojas (19 years old), Juan David Mesa (15 years old).

25 August: Ábrego, Norte de Santander. 03 people killed.



their homes in 62 mass forced displacements. 57,802 people experienced confinement caused by the armed conflict.² Seventy-one percent of displaced persons are concentrated in the departments of the Pacific region (Nariño, Chocó and Cauca).

Almost four years since the signing of the Peace Agreement, it is worrying that Colombia is once more falling into a situation of acute internal armed conflict leaving tens of thousands of civilian victims, in particular among vulnerable population groups such as afro-descendants, indigenous peoples, women and young people, who live in the most affected lands both historically and currently.

Added to this humanitarian crisis are the alarming figures related to killings of human rights defenders, social leaders and former members of the FARC-EP.

In order to stop the escalating violence, it is fundamental that:

- The European Union and its Member States make statements rejecting the intensification of the violence in Colombia
- The international community, in particular the European Union and its Member States who have accompanied the peace process, urge the Colombian State to urgently and comprehensively implement all the prevention and security measures in the Peace Agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC-EP
- The Colombian State convenes the National Commission for Security Guarantees and makes progress in the creation and implementation of a public policy to dismantle paramilitary successor groups
- The European Union urges that progress is made in the investigations of recent and historical murders and massacres, and the criminal structures that have promoted them, so that there is justice for the victims and progress in dismantling these structures. Key to this dismantling process is the strengthening of the Special Investigation Unit in the Public Prosecutor's Office, and ensuring that the mechanisms within the System for Comprehensive Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition have the resources and political support necessary to be able to carry out their work, with guarantees for the participation of the victims. Both entities have financial support from the European Union
- The international community insists that the militarisation of the regions and the increase in military deployment is not the only way to confront the current violence in the country
- The international community recognises the persistence of the internal armed conflict in the country and continues to support a negotiated solution to this conflict, in particular through the resumption of the negotiation process with the National Liberation Army
- The European Union urges the Colombian Government to implement the policies for the substitution of illicit crops, as agreed in the Peace Agreement. These policies are being implemented, however, they have been shelved in favour of policies for eradication and fumigation which have been demonstrated to not have the same reach or results.

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² OCHA: [Colombia: Humanitarian impact and tendencies between January and July 2020](#) (up to 24 August 2020).
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